

News For March

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Good food; great cooking; healthy eating

Debbie Pryer



I think spring has sprung! As I'm sitting at my desk writing the sun is pouring through the windows and the signs of spring are outside. Daffodils are showing bright yellow heads and deep purple crocuses are adding some colour to my garden. In the shops we are still waiting for the arrival of the new spring vegetables but it's another month before any really good arrives, so this month my advice is to look to your store cupboard for inspiration.

This month I have featured veggie boxes, some ideas for Easter and Mothers Day and an article on your BMI and what it means. I know a lot of people are trying to eat more healthily and I've put together some fun ways on how to achieve your five a day at work. Plus there's the usual snippets, chat, and a feature article on how to buy and eat chocolate! ENJOY

Love *Debbie*

I still need to clear out my cupboard before I can start making this year's goodies, so take full advantage of these, fantastic bargains. All at Half Price

Chutneys now £2 per jar

Kent Orchard
Paradise
Spiced Apple
Boxing Day
Spiced Damson

Jams now £1.50 per jar

Blackberry and Apple
Plum and Mulled Wine

Ring or email me to reserve your favourite
t 01622 727543 e debs@freshlands.me.uk



Farmers Markets

No sign of the Maidstone Farmers Markets but I have news of a new one in Whitstable. Held on the 2nd and 4th Saturday on the month, its held in St Margret's Hall in the High Street, (opposite the museum) from 10 till 3.

I'll be having a look this weekend.

Cooking with Debbie

For everyone who loves good food and wants to learn how to cook

Have fun with you mum on Mothers Day

Buy a 'cooking with Debbie' gift voucher for you and your mum and spend some special time together cooking and having fun.



Buy a 'cooking with Debbie' gift voucher for your mum and let her choose when and where she enjoys her very own cooking

experience. Vouchers available for one, two or more classes

Book yourself a class with me and cook something special for your mum.

Look forward to fun in the Easter Holidays

Book an 'Easter cakes and bakes' class for you and the children and have fun cooking and decorating spicy biscuits and delicious cakes.

Book 'Hot n Cross' class and find out how to make your very own hot cross buns.

Just for you. Book yourself onto my Food to keep you young and beautiful class and find out what foods are good for your body and how to cook them.

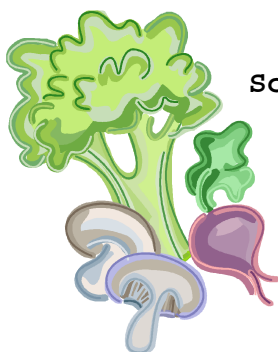
All classes @ £20 per person

All classes are tailored to age and ability.
All classes are a fully hands on experience
There is a maximum of two people per class.
Beginners or more experienced are welcome.
I am happy to welcome children from age 10 upwards.

Class times Monday, Wednesday and Thursday
 10.30 - 12.00 1.30 - 3.00 4.00 -
 5.30
Saturday morning 10.30 - to 12.00
Cost includes all ingredients.

To book Contact me on t 01622 727543 or e
 debs@freshlands.me.uk your preferred date and
 time and the classes you are interested in.

Food for March – the hungry gap.



So called because the winter veg is starting to get old and woody and the new young veg are not ready yet. However if you are lucky towards the end of the month you might find some bunches of bright orange, sweet baby carrots to eat with your roast lamb at the weekend.

On the shop shelves are piles of greens from pretty pointed spring cabbages to curly bunches of kale and the crunchy and dark January kings. Best of all will be purple spouting broccoli. Flavours to go with greens are soy, bacon, or juniper. Treat your greens with respect and cook them lightly to retain their crunch and flavour.

Hot, spicy radishes are cheap and can be added to stir fries and salads to add crunch and colour. Deep red beets may be on sale. This versatile veg can be grated into salads, mixed with lemon juice, olive oil and red onion to make a tasty salad dish, boiled and served as a hot veg, or roasted in the oven in olive oil with cumin seeds and balsamic vinegar to make a sticky, spicy dish.

Now to your store cupboard. Use tinned plum tomatoes to make great sauces and add to casseroles or soups. And pulses such as butter beans, cannellini beans or chick peas make a welcome addition to your dinner. Add to stews, casseroles, and soups. Don't forget puddings. Use short grain rice to make a creamy rice pudding, flavoured with orange or vanilla. Use batter mixes to make pancakes and fill with your favourite treat. I think that should keep us all going until the rest of the spring time food arrives.



GROW YOUR OWN and eat better 5 easy fruit and veg to grow

- 1 Strawberries in a pot or in the garden. Really Easy
- 2 Tomatoes, easy to grow and tasty and versatile to eat and cook. Try Sungold for tiny sweetest toms.
- 3 Runner beans, these grow like weeds, just keep them watered.
- 4 Lettuce varieties, cut and come varieties mean you can take a few leaves from each plant for weeks on end.

5 Radishes, ready in weeks, crisp, hot and tasty.

So what is BMI?

Body mass index (BMI) is a measure of body fat based on height and weight that applies to both adult men and women. It is an approximate measure to see if you are at a healthy weight.

To find out your BMI divide your weight by your (height) ²
Personally I can't do this math's but happily there are loads of websites that can do it for you. Try
www.bbc.co.uk/health/healthy_living/your_weight

Click on 'your BMI 'on the right hand side of the screen and then enter your weight and height. You can choose to enter in kg or stones and lbs.

If you have a BMI of less than 18.5 you are underweight,
If it is between 18.5 - 25 you are a healthy weight,
Between 25 - 30 you are over weight,
30 - 40 is obese.
Over 40, is morbidly obese.

I've just heard about new oil called Carotino. It is a blend of red palm fruit and canola oil. It is cholesterol free and contains Vitamin A, Vitamin E and Omega 3 and 6. It's high in mono-unsaturates and low in saturates, no trans fats and is apparently great for cooking, baking, dressings and stir fries. So I'm going to give it a try. It cost £1.99 and I found it in Tesco's. To find out more have a look on their web site. www.carotino.co.uk

5 easy ways to get your five a day at work

1 When ordering your chicken sandwich at lunchtime, ask them to stuff it with enough salad to give you one portion of your five a day.

2 Sneak a smoothie maker into the office kitchen.
And watch everyone else want to have a go.

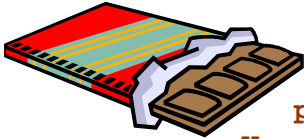
3 Always have some fruit in your office. A beautiful dish of fruit will look and smell wonderful and fill those afternoon hunger pangs. Keep it interesting with tropical fruits, soft summer fruits and local orchard fruits when in season

4 Grow a tomato plant on your desk or on a sunny window ledge. There is no way you will be able to resist those small, sweet fruits every day.

And others might like to have a taste as well.

5 Go to the local supermarket at lunch time see what fruit and veg they have on for half price, buy it and eat it.

How to find and eat the BEST chocolate.



When searching the supermarket shelves for the best chocolate you may find you have come to the wrong place and need to find a more specialist shop. However, to find the best available locally, consult the back of the pack. You are looking for the cocoa contents. The higher it is the deeper and stronger the taste of the chocolate. You never want to see 'hydrogenated fats' on the list. It's nasty stuff which gives chocolate a cloying taste and also clogs up your arteries.

Green and Blacks is a good taste but since it has been bought out by Cadburys I'm not so keen. I recommend 'Divine Fair Trade chocolate' which comes in milk or plain and has all the above going for it plus it's fair trade.

Once you have your chocolate. Take it home. Never eat chocolate on the go. Or while you are talking to someone, or watching TV or in fact while you are doing anything. Because to be appreciated a good chocolate needs your full attention.

When you are settled and it has your full attention, break of a square, yes just one. Place it in the middle of your tongue and let it melt. No chewing or crunching, just melting. Now feel that sensual mouthful grab your senses and fill you with contentment. When it's truly all gone you can have another go. Deep satisfaction plus antioxidants, what more could you ask for?



Eat your cheese (the low fat sort)

The latest news about calcium is that it can help in the fight against fat. It seems that calcium forms a sort of soapy substance around fat and makes it more difficult for our bodies to absorb. Scientific experiments carried out showed that the people who have a diet high in calcium got rid of more fat than those that didn't. So the recommendation is to include low fat dairy food in your diet. If you don't eat dairy make sure the substitute you use contains calcium.

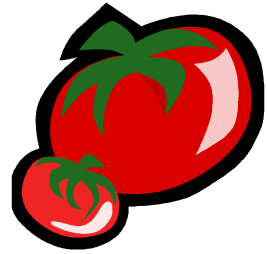
After the cold and grey winter months we decide to treat ourselves to a weekend away. We decided on North Norfolk and a recommendation from a friend turned out to be a real gem. The

Neptune in Old Hunstanton is friendly comfortable and stylish with soft beds and great food. In the morning we enjoyed a walk on a windswept and near deserted beach.

A word of warning, a lot of places were fully booked (in Feb!). So book early! www.theneptune.co.uk They have an incredible deal of dinner, bed and breakfast at £100 a night.

Have a fabulous time with

THE BIG FUN FOOD CLUB



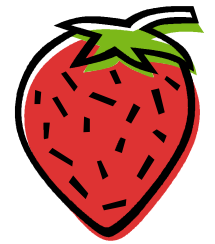
An energetic, fun packed, lively, entertaining workshop that encourages everyone to take part and gives people the inspiration and confidence to try new foods and eat better.



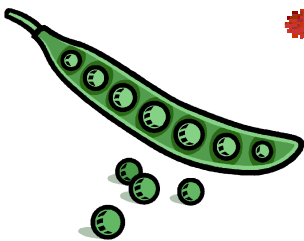
Ideal for you office, workplace, clubs, or school.

THE BFFC can be a one off session or a regular event.

THE BFFC can include



- Fun filled demonstrations, with audience help!
 - Exciting new recipes to try at home
- Try and taste - new foods, good foods, different foods
 - Really useful info on seasonal foods
- Lively (and competitive) games and quizzes
 - Tops tips on how to eat better
 - Ideas on where to buy great food
- Talk-time for questions, answers and laughs
- Bits of paper to take home with loads of interesting stuff on them



The small print

Meetings are all led by me, Debbie Pryer. All products for demos, tasting etc will be supplied by **THE BFFC**. Everyone will be encouraged to join in with activities such as tasting, helping to demo, trying out new recipes at home and taking parting in talks.

The time and length of **THE BFFC** can be tailored to the needs of the group. Handouts will be prepared for the meetings. Photocopying will be carried out by the organisation. **This is not intended to be a weight management club.**

Contact details

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All about veggie boxes.

Veggie Boxes are a great way of buying good quality fruit and vegetables and having them delivered directly to your door. There are usually different size boxes and some combine fruit and veg. There are national suppliers and local businesses.



problems can occur if veg is past its best or there are lots of veggies that you don't like. Here are details of three, of which two have been recommended.

The Old Dairy_A local supplier with a shop and a box scheme. Boxes are delivered on a Thursday evening or you can pick up for yourself. Boxes contain 7 - 9 seasonal items and you are allowed up to three dislikes. A small box costs £7, medium box £10 and large £13. They come recommended by a very good friend of mine. Call Steve on 01622 861113 or look at the web www.olddairy-online.co.uk

Able and Cole are well known in the London area and deliver free to different parts of Kent. Check by putting in your post code on their web site. A Farmers choice vegetable box costs £6.50 and a family Organic box £22.00. They offer more than veg including drinks, meat and fish. Ok if you have internet access and are not worried about food miles. www.abel-cole.co.uk Tel 0845 626262

Harvest 4 You Organics Run by David Barber and his wife, and based in Aylesford, they deliver weekly to the Maidstone and Medway area and source locally whenever possible. Their boxes range from £6 for a small box up to £15 for a mixed family box. They are very flexible and you can order one box occasionally or a regular box or change what you want every week. Which must be a nightmare for them! You can also ask them not to include the fruit and veg that you don't like. They come highly recommended especially for their friendly personal service, reasonable prices and variety of boxes. www.harvest4U.co.uk Tel: M/S 717019

I'm really pleased to send you my newsletter and I hope you find the news and info interesting and useful. If you are no longer interested in receiving this type of information or have received it in error, please let me know and I will remove you from my list. I would also like to spread the word, so please feel free to pass this newsletter on to anyone who you feel would be interested in food news.